

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application and the rejection of claims 13, 19-20, 24-25 and 29-31 are respectfully requested. Applicants have attempted to address every objection and ground for rejection in the Office Action dated October 31, 2003 (Paper No. 17) and believe the application is now in condition for allowance. The claims have been amended to more clearly describe the present invention.

Applicants acknowledge the allowability of claims 15-17, 26-28 and 29-31 if rewritten to either incorporate corresponding independent claims and/or to correct rejections based on 35 U.S.C. § 112. Accordingly, claim 13 has been amended to incorporate features of claim 15, new claim 34 is claim 1 rewritten to incorporate features of claim 17, claim 19 has been amended to incorporate features of cancelled claim 28 and claim 20 has been amended to recite additional features not disclosed by the reference. As such, the pending claims are submitted to be in allowable form.

Claims 20 and 29-31 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112 as being indefinite regarding the phrase “ substantially coaxial”. As amended, claim 20 now recites, among other things, that the sheath portion is substantially coaxial with the blade portion. With this amendment, the rejection under Section 112 is respectfully traversed.

Claim 13 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by newly cited Himebaugh (US 3,261,578). However, as amended, claim 13 now, among other things,

incorporates features of canceled claim 15, indicated as allowable and neither disclosed nor suggested by Himebaugh. Accordingly, the rejection of claim 13 is respectfully traversed.

Claims 19, 24 and 25 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Himebaugh (US 3,261,578). However, claim 19 has been amended by incorporating, among other things, features of canceled claim 28, indicated as allowable. Himebaugh fails to disclose or suggest the subject matter of claim 19 as amended. Accordingly the rejection of claims 19, 24 and 25 is respectfully traversed.

Claim 20 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Himebaugh (US 3,261,578). Himebaugh discloses a bracket for use in hanging picture frames or the like on a wall. As disclosed, there is overlap of the items being hung, such as a picture and the underlying wall, and the respective sheath and bar components 10 and 15 are mounted to the respective components in a "back-to-back" fashion exemplified in FIG. 6 of the reference.

In contrast, as amended, claim 20 recites among other things that upon assembly of the bracket, the mounting formation of the blade portion and the mounting formation of the sheath portion are configured to be in opposed, contacting relationship to each other such that the corresponding adjacent components are in abutting relationship to each other, and said mounting formations are on the same relative side of the associated component. This relationship is depicted in FIG. 14 of the present application and finds further support on page 23, lines 4-7. Himebaugh fails to disclose such structure or the

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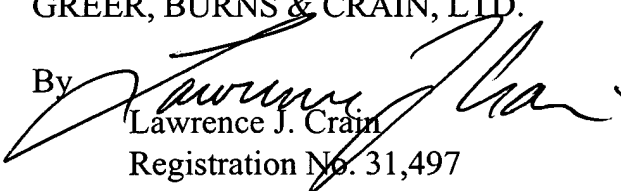
relationship of the coupled components (picture and wall), and further, the now recited relationship is counter to the teachings and context of the Himebaugh device. If, assuming for purposes of argument only, that the two bracket portions 10 and 15 of Himebaugh were mounted on the same side of corresponding components to join them in the claimed abutting fashion, the tongue 17 would not be in mating engagement with the bracket 11, thus defeating the purpose of the bracket. In view of the failure of Himebaugh to disclose or suggest the structure as now recited in amended claim 20, the rejection based thereon is respectfully traversed.

Applicants submit that in view of the above-identified amendments and remarks, the claims in their present form are patentably distinct over the art of record. Allowance of the rejected claims is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner discover there are remaining issues which may be resolved by a telephone interview, he is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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